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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: KADYROV ORDERS HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN
CHECHNYA TO RELOCATE TO GROZNY

Classified By: Acting PolCouns Colin Cleary for Reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In an effort to increase his control over international humanitarian organizations operating in Chechnya, Chechen President Kadyrov on August 4 demanded that they relocate their offices to Grozny within two weeks (many currently operate from Ingushetia or South Ossetia). Kadyrov's order suits UN organizations, which have been trying for months to get Russian MFA permission to open offices there. However, the MFA is refusing to allow the UN to relocate. It appears the Kremlin wants to minimize foreign presence in the Caucasus in the run-up to the 2008 presidential election. End Summary.

Kadyrov's Order

¶2. (SBU) Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov held an extraordinary session of the government August 4, at which he announced that all international humanitarian organizations (IHOs) wishing to continue working in Chechnya would need to operate from offices in the capital city of Grozny. Kadyrov made a similar pronouncement on May 30, but did not at that time specify a deadline. Kadyrov did not specify what steps would be taken against those which did not comply.

No Effect on UN Agencies

¶3. (C) Inge Breuer of WFP and Wolfgang Milzow of UNHCR told us that Kadyrov's demand will not affect UN operations in Chechnya. Breuer noted that the UN representation has been seeking MFA permission to open offices in Grozny since the UN downgraded the security risk earlier this year. The MFA has not answered formally, but has let the UN know informally that "now is not the time." Milzow said the UN raised this with the MFA again when Kadyrov made his statement in May. The MFA told the UN that it would not be "appropriate" for them to move to Grozny, and that they did not need to comply. Breuer said the UN would feel more comfortable in Grozny than in its current offices in Ingushetia, which recently experienced a number of security incidents, including an RPG attack. She added that the UN has met with Chechen officials who understand the UN's difficulty in getting permission from Moscow, and assure the UN that Kadyrov's demand will not apply to it.

¶4. (SBU) ICRC already has an office in Grozny, as do a number of government-affiliated NGOs such as the Danish Refugee Council, CARE-Canada and the IRC.

NGOs: Unaware, Unaffected, or Unfazed

15. (SBU) Russian and international NGOs working in Chechnya had mixed views on the order. Human Rights Watch deputy director for Europe Rachel Denber (who was visiting Russia for two weeks) was still trying to find out the specifics of the order to determine the effect that it would have on HRW. Memorial director Grigoriy Shvedov said that since Memorial already had an office in Groznyy, it would not be affected by any changes. Amnesty International's Sergey Nikitin told us that AI does not have an office in Chechnya and that all staff members working on Chechnya were based in London.

Comment

16. (C) The contradiction between Kadyrov's demands and the MFA's refusal to let the UN relocate highlights the conflicting motivations within the Russian government. Kadyrov wants all the assistance organizations and NGOs right where he can watch them, influence them (North Ossetia is now over-saturated with assistance as a benefit of most aid agencies having offices there), monitor their expenditures, and enjoy the prestige and legitimacy of having foreigners at his "court." The Kremlin, on the other hand, wants to minimize foreign presence in the Caucasus in the run-up to the 2008 presidential elections, eliminating (in its view) a factor that might make the transition bumpy. As a Kremlin staffer told us, "UN-funded programs were telling people to protest bad government. That's destabilizing. Let them do that in Saratov, or somewhere -- but not in the North Caucasus, where the break-up of Russia began. Not now."
RUSSELL